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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000065

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [UN](#) [SU](#) [UG](#)
SUBJECT: Charge's Meeting with UNSRSG Ashraff Qazi

CLASSIFIED BY: REWhitehead, CDA, State, EXEC; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (sbu) Summary. Charge d'Affaires (CDA) Whitehead met with United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Ashraff Qazi, the head of the United Nations Mission to Sudan (UNMIS), on January 11. Qazi discussed UNMIS personnel changes, Sudan's upcoming general elections, the anticipated UNMIS security role for both the elections in the South and Abyei, and a reported threat to Uganda Airways. He also shared the latest UNMIS intelligence on the location of Joseph Kony and the core force of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The meeting shed light on a number of topics, to include the reluctance of UNMIS to be drawn into security areas that it perceives outside its present mandate. End summary.

The UN Line-up in Sudan

¶2. (sbu) Qazi said Charge that he had returned home to Pakistan for the holiday break with the intention of returning to Khartoum for a final pack-out and late January departure. He said the UN headquarters in New York had pressured him to stay on, however, and over the objections of his family he had agreed to remain in Khartoum until late April, following the conclusion of Sudan's general elections. He said that his imminent departure was not the only shift underway at the top level of the UN hierarchy in Sudan. General (retired) Lidder Singh, former UNMIS military commander, was due to return to Khartoum as Chief UN Political Officer, and in late February a Finn named Charpentier (FNU) would arrive to replace UN Senior Humanitarian Coordinator Ameera Haq. Qazi said that he was uncertain if David Gressly, the most senior UN official in Southern Sudan, intended to remain in Juba or to take up another post.

Singing the Elections Blues

¶3. (sbu) Qazi turned to the April national elections in Sudan, which he viewed as a serious challenge to Southern Sudan in particular. He noted the recent proliferation of initiatives to postpone the elections and Southern/Abyei referenda, the most recent a call by Umma's Siddiq Al Mahdi, Umma Renewal's Mubarak al Mahdi, and various other opposition leaders to reschedule the

elections in November 2010. Charge replied that the US view was that the elections and referenda should go forward as now scheduled. Qazi said that the SPLM was struggling with the nominations of candidates; the growing number of those seeking governorships and seats in the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly was creating the potential for internal disputes and violence. He continued that UNMIS Juba had forwarded reports of serious tension between the Nuer and Dinka camps in the SPLM over an initiative by some senior Dinka leaders to restrict SPLM candidacy to those who had uninterrupted membership in the SPLM for the last ten years, thus in one fell swoop eliminating Riak Machar and the other senior Nuer leaders that had rejoined the SPLM seven years ago. UNMIS Political Officer Muin Shreim interjected that he thought January 13 and 14 SPLM Politburo meeting would reject this notion as well as choose (or not choose) a SPLM candidate for the national presidency. Qazi said that the imminent resignation of GoSS ministers and their return as the custodians of a pre-electoral caretaker government was also likely to further complicate the sclerotic decision making process in the South. Muin asked about recent Sudanese newspaper reports that the US had demanded that Sudan change its security law. Charge suggested that he avoid the local tabloids and instead read the Secretary's remarks in which she called on the GOS to allow freedom of speech and assembly and other basic rights without which the April elections were likely become a farce.

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Security, or the Lack Thereof

¶4. (sbu) Qazi lamented the poor start of 2010 in terms of security conditions in the South of Sudan. Less than two weeks into the New Year, the body count from inter-ethnic and inter-communal violence had already topped three-hundred and fifty. Charge concurred that the potential for conflict was heightened by the electoral cycle and asked about the anticipated role of UNMIS in providing security during the elections. Qazi responded that UNMIS was training Sudanese police and would deploy forces into the countryside during the campaign and elections period, but he cautioned that the primary responsibility for electoral security devolved to GoSS security forces, and not to UNMIS.

¶5. (c) Charge observed that the security situation in Abyei is also troubling and noted that some in the international community had called on a more pro-active UNMIS stance, including the protection of the border demarcation team that had been barred by Misseriya tribesmen from completing its work on demarcation of the northern boundary adjudicated by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). Qazi replied that enforcing the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the North and South was not and never had been within the mandate of UNMIS. In more practical terms, an UNMIS attempt to force this issue would likely lead to a confrontation with the Misseriya that would involve the Sudanese Armed Forces. It would also roil the sensibilities of the troop-contributing countries with forces involved and create a backlash in New York if there were casualties on any side. He said that there had always been a double-standard of sorts on robust UNMIS involvement in favor of Southern concerns vis a vis the interests of the North. He cited one of the most flagrant violations of the CPA, the SPLA's failure to redeploy its forces out of Blue Nile State, and noted that no one in the international community had yet called on UNMIS to take robust action to expel these forces, not that UNMIS would be willing to undertake such a mission anyway.

UNMIS Ban on the Use of Ugandan Airlines out of Juba

¶6. (sbu) Charge cited press reports that on the basis of independent information UNMIS had restricted its personnel from using Ugandan Airlines on the Juba/ Kampala route. Qazi said that UNMIS had acted solely on the basis of a US Embassy warden message that referred to a reported threats by unnamed individuals to take action a Ugandan aircraft plying this route.

The LRA in CAR

¶7. (c) Qazi gave the Charge the most recent UNMIS intelligence report on the presence of the LRA in and along the southern and western borders of Sudan. He said that Joseph Kony and the core group of LRA, an estimated 150 fighters and 300-400 camp followers, were currently thought to be located in the Central African Republic about 50 kilometers east of Sam Oundja, near the CAR/Chad/Sudan triangle. An estimated 2,000-2,500 troops of the Ugandan Popular Defense Forces continued to track this force. Muin said that the UN had no information indicating that the LRA had attempted to enter Sudan to make common cause with the rebel Justice and Equality Movement and noted that the small number of LRA fighters involved would in any case do little to tip the existing military balance.

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Comment

¶8. (c) Qazi has proven an open and accessible interlocutor for the US Embassy, and he has been supportive of most of our initiatives. He maintains a strict constructionist interpretation of the UNMIS mandate, however, and we do not expect him to yield ground on using UNMIS forces to enforce the PCA decision in Abyei or take other measures that he views outside of the UN's purview. End comment.
WHITEHEAD